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AUTHOR Martin, Irene
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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the college's commitment to and responsibility for the attainment of the goals set forth by the National Right to Read Program. The goals of the Right to Read Program are: to disseminate information relative to reading, specifically, identifying and validating effective reading programs; to implement strategies for correcting existing reading and literacy problems and instituting educational reforms; and to share effective staff development techniques. The Learning Center concept, which represents a comprehensive network of support systems designed to facilitate student learning at New York City Community College, is supplementary to the basic remediation provided for underprepared freshman students. The major strategies identified by the Learning Center staff to achieve its objectives focus upon the application of remedial techniques, methods, and materials to specific content areas in departmental courses. (WR)

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THE COLLEGE COMMITMENT TO ATTAINABLE NATIONAL GOALS - LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR OPEN ADMISSIONS STUDENTS

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Prof. Irene Martin
New York City Community College

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THE COLLEGE COMMITMENT TO ATTAINABLE NATIONAL GOALS -
LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR OPEN ADMISSIONS STUDENTS

The National Right to Read Program represents the efforts of all elements of society-public and private, professional and nonprofessional- to make certain that no individual shall be denied a full and useful life because of an inability to read effectively.

The National Right to Read Effort is not a single program or approach, but rather a great variety of efforts aimed at achieving the goal that 99% of the people 16 years old and 90% of those over 16 shall be functionally literate by 1980.

The Right to Read office within the United States Office of Education has identified the following objectives:

1. To disseminate information relative to reading, - specifically, identifying and validating effective reading programs.
2. To implement strategies for correcting existing reading and literacy problems and instituting educational reforms.
3. To share effective staff development techniques.

This paper will focus on the College's commitment and responsibility in the attainment of these goals.

Conferences such as this, are essential to Goal 1. It is only through the willingness of colleges and their faculties to share their experiences that new, innovative

and effective educational programs can be implemented and replicated.

The City University of New York, initiated a policy of Open Admissions in September 1970. Often the level of academic preparation of the Open Admissions student falls far below the minimum levels necessary for successful completion of the college course of study. The content of previous high school courses often do not meet the prerequisite levels necessary for survival in freshman courses. Students enrolled in career and transfer programs need to be prepared to meet a rigorous curriculum. Organizational skills need to be developed so that learning may be enhanced through lecture, laboratory, and clinical experiences. Often a career program will culminate in local, state or federal licensure and/or certification examinations. The process of successfully completing the course of study and acquiring necessary certification is perceived as an overwhelming task by the open admissions student. It is incumbent upon us, as educators, to explore the options for continued higher education so that students enrolled in career and transfer programs may widen their horizons to include a wide range of educational opportunities.

The second goal of the National Right to Read Effort deals with the implementation of strategies to correct existing reading and literacy problems.

The Learning Center concept represents a comprehensive network of support systems designed to facilitate student learning at New York City Community College, it is supplementary to the

basic remediation provided for underprepared freshman students, once a freshman has achieved a basic competency level, and is enrolled in a first term program of courses in his major department, learning center support is available to him. The Learning Center utilizes a team of content faculty, remedial specialists, counselors, and tutors to provide alternate learning strategies for these students.

The major strategies identified by the Learning Center staff to achieve its objectives, focus upon the application of remedial techniques, methods, and materials, to specific content areas in departmental courses. The following activities are designed to create an environment for non-traditional learning:

Diagnostic Testing & Base Line Data

Diagnostic tests are developed to pinpoint the prerequisite vocabulary, reading comprehension, and related content skills necessary for entering freshman to succeed in their first term course of study. In addition, a comprehensive review of high school records serves to aid in the placement of students for remediation, pre-requisite training or first-term programming.

Tutorial Assistance

Tutoring is a complex process based on a sensitivity to the educational and emotional needs of the tutee. Effective tutoring is based on the mastery of the subject matter through supportive tutorial assistance with the ultimate goal of tutee self-direction.

Tutorial assistance can function beyond the parameters of old constraints. It can be supportive of a multitude of learning situations which include the open laboratory, and the multi-level learning center.

Freshman Study Skills Mini-Course

Courses offered to freshman students, deal with reading and study skills applied to a specific target content course within each curriculum. The Learning Center staff consults with content faculty members to analyze required readings within the content curriculum. Mini-course skills include; study techniques, textbook notemaking, lecture notetaking, vocabulary development, test-taking techniques, facility with reference sources, and flexibility of reading rate.

Sequential Modules of Instruction

Instructional modules are developed to meet the needs of students with varying backgrounds and educational skills. They encompass single concept units of learning within the framework of an awareness of pre-requisite skills, current curriculum and enrichment activities.

Supportive Media Aids

A media team is made available to work with faculty to design and develop supportive instructional aids for classroom use, tutorial sessions, and student reference. The production resources of the college are utilized.

Media Cross-Reference

Materials are housed in various locations at the college. It is necessary for faculty to be aware of existing resources applicable to their course content. A system of cataloguing media available to the departments, throughout the college, and from commercial sources needs to be established. This would aid new faculty, as well as experienced faculty teaching

new courses, in presenting appropriate materials and experiences to enhance student learning within the classroom.

Student Development Workshops

Student Development Workshops explore the wide range of educational options and occupational opportunities available to students. The various career choices are defined and the procedures for continuing education and assessing one's goals are examined.

The objectives established by the Learning Center staff for students reflect the severe gaps in the academic skills of many students at New York City Community College. The objectives defined by the Center staff are congruent with the value system of a college which serves many students who have academic problems. They carry strong recommendations for the introduction of alternative learning strategies and innovative techniques. This calls for new value sets and requires the implementation of informational processes which result in both verbal and behavioral commitments from Division faculty. In this way learning support services may provide non-traditional learning environments for Open Admissions students.